MEDIACOMMUNICATION IN THE MEANS OF CULTURAL VALUES

Petrosyans Ernst Ashotovich

ernstpetrosyanc@gmail.com

Master of Arts in Linguistic Support of Intercultural Communication

(English)

This article explores the intricate relationship between mediacommunication and cultural values, examining how media serves as both a reflection and a shaper of societal norms, beliefs, and traditions. The article highlights how media influences cultural identity formation, either by affirming traditional values or introducing new, globalized norms. It also addresses the role of media in cultural conflicts, its potential to promote dialogue and understanding, and the impact of cultural values on media content production, including censorship and regulation. Moreover, the article delves into the dual nature of media globalization, discussing both its role in fostering cultural diversity and its potential to propagate cultural imperialism.

Key words: *mediacommunication, cultural values, cross-cultural exchanges, media globalization, media, globalized norms.*

Introduction

Mediacommunication plays a central role in the transmission of cultural values, acting as both a mirror and a conveyor of the beliefs, norms, and traditions that define societies. Through various forms such as television, film, radio, print, and social media, media platforms not only reflect the existing cultural landscape but also actively shape it. Cultural values, which encompass collective beliefs about what is considered good, desirable, or acceptable in a society, are embedded in media content, whether through storytelling, news reporting, entertainment, or advertisements. Media provides a wide-reaching avenue for these values to be shared, reinforced, or challenged across diverse populations.

In many societies, the media not only reflects the dominant culture but also works to preserve its heritage. Documentaries, historical dramas, and cultural programming provide platforms for safeguarding traditions, languages, and historical memories. These forms of media serve as cultural archives, ensuring that the values of the past are kept alive for future generations. This is particularly important for marginalized or indigenous cultures, where media can offer a means to resist cultural erasure and promote cultural pride and continuity.

The globalized nature of modern media also facilitates cross-cultural exchanges, where the transmission of cultural values extends beyond national borders. Audiences around the world are exposed to different cultures through international films, music, and social media, creating opportunities for cultural understanding and appreciation. However, this same globalization raises concerns about cultural homogenization, where dominant media industries—often from Western countries—impose their values on local cultures, potentially leading to cultural imperialism. In such cases, local traditions and values may be overshadowed by global media influences, altering the cultural fabric of a society[1].

Moreover, the transmission of cultural values through media is not always passive. Audiences engage with media content, interpreting it through their own cultural lens and sometimes resisting or reinterpreting the values presented. Social media, in particular, has empowered individuals to actively participate in the creation and dissemination of cultural content. Users can share their own cultural narratives, challenge dominant discourses, and promote values they believe are important. This interactive nature of digital media allows for a more dynamic and democratized process of cultural transmission, where diverse voices can be heard, and cultural values can evolve in real-time.

Literature review

The research begins with an extensive review of existing scholarly works on cultural identity formation and media's role in either fostering or challenging

---

[1] Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel & Carolyn S. Roy (2013). Communication Between Cultures, Eighth Edition. Boston, US.

cultural values. Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation, which argues that media is a central player in constructing and negotiating identities, forms the foundational framework for understanding how individuals and groups develop their sense of cultural belonging[2]. In addition, the research draws from Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel's (2013) cross-cultural communication theories to highlight how media impacts identity formation across different cultural settings[3].

We also explore Johan Galtung's (1990) framework on cultural conflicts and violence, focusing on how media can act as both a catalyst for conflict and a platform for resolution. This section aims to contextualize the relationship between media content, cultural differences, and the potential for conflicts to emerge[4].

Research Methodology

The formation of cultural identity is deeply influenced by the media, which serves as a powerful platform for shaping how individuals and groups understand themselves and others within society. Media not only reflects cultural norms and values but actively participates in constructing and negotiating identities. Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation emphasizes how media acts as a site where meanings are produced and identities are constructed through the representation of cultural symbols, traditions, and ideologies. Through films, television, social media, and news, individuals are exposed to narratives that either affirm or challenge their sense of cultural belonging[5].

Media plays a significant role in reinforcing cultural identity by offering images, stories, and symbols that resonate with a community's shared history, values, and beliefs. For example, national media often emphasizes stories of

---

[2] Hall, S. (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage Publications & Open University.

[3] Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel & Carolyn S. Roy (2013). Communication Between Cultures, Eighth Edition. Boston, US.

[4] Galtung J. (1990). "Cultural Violence," Journal of Peace Research, Peace Research Institute Oslo, vol. 27(3), pages 291-305.

[5] Hall, S. (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage Publications & Open University.

patriotism, cultural heritage, and collective memory, strengthening a sense of belonging to a particular cultural or national identity. On the other hand, media can also challenge or reshape cultural identities by introducing new, globalized values, especially as individuals consume media from diverse cultural contexts. This exposure to global media content can lead to a hybridization of cultural identities, where traditional values blend with modern, transnational influences.

However, cultural identity formation through media is not a neutral process. The way the media portrays certain cultural groups can reinforce stereotypes or marginalize particular communities, influencing how they are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. Representation in media matters significantly because it shapes societal attitudes toward various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. Positive portrayals of a group can enhance cultural pride and visibility, while negative or stereotypical representations can contribute to social exclusion and identity crises. In addition to influencing identity formation, media plays a central role in cultural conflicts. Johan Galtung's (1990) framework on cultural violence suggests that media can either exacerbate tensions between cultural groups or serve as a platform for peacebuilding. When media perpetuates divisive narratives, portrays one group as the cultural "other," or sensationalizes cultural differences, it can contribute to misunderstandings and conflict[6]. For instance, media coverage during ethnic or religious conflicts can heighten tensions by framing certain groups in a negative light, reinforcing cultural boundaries, and fueling xenophobia or mistrust.

The appropriateness of media in addressing cultural conflicts is also influenced by how well it matches the complexity of the communication context. Media Richness Theory (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987) suggests that different types of media vary in their capacity to convey nuanced cultural information[7]. For example, face-to-face communication is considered richer than text-based

---

[6] Galtung J. (1990). "Cultural Violence," Journal of Peace Research, Peace Research Institute Oslo, vol. 27(3), pages 291-305.

[7] Daft, R.L., Lengel, R.H. and Trevino, L.K. (1987) Message Equivocality, Media Selection, and Manager Performance: Implications for Information Systems. MIS Quarterly, 11, 355-366.

communication because it allows for the exchange of more contextual, emotional, and non-verbal cues. In cross-cultural communication, the richness of media becomes particularly important, as cultural differences can complicate the transmission of meanings. Media that is effective in one cultural context may not be appropriate in another, leading to further misunderstandings or conflicts.

Additionally, audience interpretation of media content plays a critical role in the construction of cultural identities and conflicts. According to Hall's (1997) encoding/decoding model, media messages are not passively consumed; rather, audiences actively interpret them based on their own cultural backgrounds and experiences. This means that individuals from different cultures may decode the same media message in diverse ways, either reinforcing or resisting the values and identities presented. Social media, in particular, allows for a more interactive form of engagement with media content, where users can share their interpretations, challenge dominant cultural narratives, and create alternative cultural representations[8].

Analysis and results

The role of media as a cultural shaper is undeniable, as it not only mirrors societal values but also actively influences the way cultural norms and identities evolve over time. Through its vast reach, the media has the power to shape public opinion, challenge existing beliefs, and introduce new cultural perspectives. The analysis of media's role in this transformative process reveals that media operates both overtly and subtly in the cultural domain, impacting individual and collective perceptions of what is considered culturally acceptable, valuable, or normative.

One significant finding in our analysis is that media content often reinforces dominant cultural values, especially in mainstream platforms like national news, television series, and popular films. These media outlets tend to reflect the values held by the majority or those in power, maintaining the status quo by emphasizing themes such as patriotism, traditional family roles, and gender norms. For example, in many societies, the media continues to depict

---

[8] Hall, S. (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage Publications & Open University.

certain professions, lifestyles, or behaviors as more respectable or ideal, which in turn influences how people aspire to live or behave. At the same time, the media acts as a tool for cultural transformation by introducing new ideas and challenging outdated norms. This is particularly evident in the rise of social media and digital platforms, where marginalized groups and subcultures gain visibility and voice. Media has increasingly become a platform for social movements, such as those advocating for gender equality, and environmental sustainability. These movements often gain traction and challenge societal norms through viral campaigns, hashtags, and user-generated content, demonstrating how media can shape culture by promoting inclusivity and diversity.

Another result from the analysis is the role of media in shaping global cultural exchange. With the advent of digital media and globalization, people are exposed to cultural values from all over the world. International films, music, and online platforms enable the blending of cultural identities, leading to a form of cultural hybridization where traditional values mix with global influences. This process reshapes local cultures, sometimes leading to the adaptation of new customs, fashions, and ideas. However, the spread of global media also raises concerns about cultural imperialism, where dominant Western media industries often overshadow local traditions and values, influencing how non-Western cultures perceive themselves.

We also reveal that while the media serves as a platform for cultural change, it can simultaneously reinforce stereotypes and contribute to cultural marginalization. Media representations of minority groups often perpetuate stereotypes, which can shape how these groups are viewed by the broader public. Negative or simplistic portrayals of ethnic, religious, or marginalized groups can solidify cultural biases and reinforce divisions within society. In this sense, the media has a dual role—while it can be a tool for social change and cultural evolution, it can also entrench existing prejudices and inequalities.

Finally, the results show that the impact of media as a cultural shaper is not uniform; it is interpreted differently depending on the audience's cultural background and experiences. Audiences do not passively absorb media messages;

they actively engage with and interpret them in ways that align with or challenge their own cultural perspectives. This highlights the complexity of media's influence on culture, as the same media content can shape cultural understanding in varied ways depending on how it is consumed and interpreted.

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping culture, reinforcing existing values while also serving as a platform for social change and the introduction of new norms. Its influence is far-reaching, from reinforcing dominant ideologies to offering marginalized groups a voice. However, the media's ability to shape culture is complex, as it is subject to audience interpretation and can both challenge and entrench cultural norms simultaneously.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

The role of media in shaping cultural values and identity is both profound and multifaceted. Media serves not only as a reflection of societal norms but also as a catalyst for cultural change, offering a platform for both reinforcing and challenging existing beliefs. As this article has demonstrated, the media plays a dual role in cultural identity formation—either promoting inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding or perpetuating stereotypes and social divisions. Media's power to influence perceptions, especially in a globalized world, demands a thoughtful and critical approach to both media consumption and production.Given the influential role of media, it is essential for content creators, journalists, and media outlets to be mindful of the messages they disseminate. Ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented fairly in the media is key to fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society. It is also important for media consumers to critically engage with the content they encounter, questioning representations and seeking out diverse sources of information to develop a more nuanced understanding of cultural issues.

Recommendations for future research in this area include a deeper examination of the effects of digital media on identity formation in younger generations, as well as further exploration into how media can be harnessed as a tool for conflict resolution in culturally diverse societies. Additionally, media literacy programs should be encouraged, particularly in educational settings, to

empower individuals to critically analyze the media's role in shaping cultural perceptions and avoid the pitfalls of media manipulation. In essence, the media holds the potential to bridge cultural divides and promote shared values, but it must be wielded with responsibility and awareness of its deep societal impact. As the philosopher Marshall McLuhan once said, "The medium is the message"—reminding us that the tools we use to communicate are as powerful as the content they convey. By being more conscious of how media shapes culture, we can foster a world where media serves as a positive force for unity and understanding.

The used literature

1) Daft, R.L., Lengel, R.H. and Trevino, L.K. (1987) Message Equivocality, Media Selection, and Manager Performance: Implications for Information Systems. MIS Quarterly, 11, 355-366.

2) Galtung J. (1990). "Cultural Violence," Journal of Peace Research, Peace Research Institute Oslo, vol. 27(3), pages 291-305.

3) Hall, S. (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage Publications & Open University.

4) Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel & Carolyn S. Roy (2013). Communication Between Cultures, Eighth Edition. Boston, US.